



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330-1000

SEP 29 2004

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

SAF/LL
1160 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1160

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6035

Dear Mr. Chairman

In accordance with the FY 1998 Defense Appropriation Conference Report (105-265), this letter requests approval for the Air Force's life-of-type procurement of commercial glass material utilized in ruggedized active matrix liquid crystal displays (AMLCD) and associated electronic components required for Electronic Engine Displays (EED) integral to the Avionics Upgrade Program (AUP) for the T-38 training aircraft.

L3 Communications Display Division is the manufacturer of the T-38 EEDs. Their supplier, American Panel Corporation (APC), makes the ruggedized AMLCDs incorporated into the EEDs. These companies will be unable to purchase electronic components (integrated circuits, random access memory, optical amplifiers, and Glint chips that are going out of production) and commercial glass material (no longer commercially viable to produce) in the future (FY2005-2008) to complete the AUP modification to T-38 aircraft.

If we do not make a life-of-type procurement while components are still available, the ability to complete the T-38 upgrade on its planned schedule will be impacted and will result in a production break. The estimated cost of a redesign effort is \$2-3 million over 15 to 18 months. Approximately the same material and labor costs will be required to procure the components. The life-of-type procurement has no net additional cost to the overall program, and is the more cost effective alternative.

The life-of-type procurement can be accommodated within existing T-38 appropriations. The Air Force has \$2.6 million of FY2003/2004 T-38 AUP funding available to implement this life-of-type buy. In addition to the specific approval requested above, we request blanket approval for other life-of-type procurements to complete the T-38 AUP (if required and cost effective), with the condition that such procurements can be accommodated within existing T-38 funding.

A similar letter has been sent to the Ranking Minority Member of your Committee and to the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the other Congressional Defense Committees.

Very respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott S. Custer", written in a cursive style.

SCOTT S. CUSTER
Major General, USAF
Director, Legislative Liaison